EDUC 525: Language & Learning in Home & School Settings (26761)
Winter Semester, 2015

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Course Description
EDUC 525 introduces students to the study of language development from pre-school through the school years. Topics include how language development is related to learning more generally, how language development at home and in the community relates to learning in school, similarities and differences between spoken and written language development, and how classroom discourse contributes to language development, literacy, and subject matter learning. Bilingual development is addressed throughout the course. Students learn to analyze language and develop strategies for supporting children’s language development at school as well as consider approaches to conducting research on language development.

In this course we will study the language development of children from preschool through the school years, looking at learning in the home and community as well as language learning at school. We will engage with questions such as these:

• What is language development? How is language development related to learning more generally?
• How does language development at home and in the community relate to learning in school?
• How does language develop during the school years?
• How are spoken and written language similar and different?
• How does written language develop?
• How does classroom discourse contribute to language development and subject matter learning?
• What is the relationship between language and literacy?
• How do experiences with other languages and other varieties of English influence learning at school?
• What do teachers need to know about language and language development?

You will learn to analyze spoken and written language and develop strategies for conducting research on language development and for supporting children’s language development at school.

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way
the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodation through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Readings
Required book:

Other assigned readings and resources are available on the CTools website under the “Resources” link.

Requirements
1. Attend class and participate in class discussions, including working with a group to demonstrate activities that support language development for an age group you are particularly interested in (25% of grade).
2. Complete assigned homework analysis tasks (20% of grade).
3. Conduct an analysis of a young child’s language (Project #1; guidelines will be provided). Due March 9th (25% of grade).
4. Complete a project of your design related to language development (Project #2; we will discuss options in class and you will develop a proposal and discuss it with me). Due at the last class session April 20th (30% of grade).

Tentative schedule of topics and readings (subject to change)

January 12  Introduction to Course
What is language? How is language learned? How do we study language development? What role does language play in school learning? What do teachers, teacher educators, and researchers need to understand about language and language development?


Bring to class: The Menyuk and Brisk book.

January 19  Martin Luther King Day – No Class
January 26

Language development in the first years
How does language develop in young children? How does it vary with children’s different experiences and abilities? What is the role of parents and caregivers? How do we study early language development?

Professor Ioulia Kovelman of the UM psychology department will be a guest speaker today. For more about her work visit her faculty website or:
Language & Literacy Lab:
http://www.sitemaker.umich.edu/childlanguage/home

Readings: Menyuk & Brisk chapters one and two


Bring to class: A brief reflection on experiences you have had that are informing your view of language development, along with a short statement of your goals for this course and topics you may be interested in pursuing for your final project (total one page, double-spaced).

Homework assignment on phonetics

February 2

Linguistic constructs for studying language development
(Cancelled because of snow day; we will do the work described here on February 9. Please also read ahead as we will have a two-session meeting on February 16th).

How do we study language development? How do we ensure that our conclusions about children's development are valid and reliable? Why is it important to be able to assess children's language development?

Readings:


Review in preparation for language analysis project:
February 9 and February 16: note changes!

We will do the work for February 9 and February 16 on February 16 in a session from 4:00 – 7:00 (with breaks and food! Be ready to discuss the readings and assignments for both sessions at that time)

February 9  
**Language development in the pre-school years; the foundations of literacy**  
What aspects of the home and school environment affect children's language development? What do teachers need to know about pre-school children’s language development? How does language learning in the pre-school years prepare children for literacy?

**Readings:**  
Menyuk & Brisk chapters three and four  

**Bring to class:**  
Homework speech function analysis of the language sample handed out in class

**Reminder:**  
By now, you should have gotten permission from parents of a young child and either met with the child or else scheduled a time to meet with the child to collect your language samples. This part of your project should be completed this week at the latest.

February 16  
**Language development in the primary school years; the role of oral language in the development of literacy**  
How does spoken language contribute to the development of literacy? What support can teachers provide for language development in the classroom? How do we study classroom interaction?

**Readings:**  
Menyuk & Brisk chapter five  
February 23  

**Language development in the primary school years: developing academic language**

What is the role of the teacher in helping students improve their understanding of pragmatics and semantax? What does this look like in classroom settings? What are your experiences with supporting children to understand the structures and uses of language?

**Readings:**  

Menyuk & Brisk chapter six  


**Bring to class:**  

Transcript of your interaction with a young child for Project #1. We will review the procedures for analyzing your data and address problems you may have encountered.

Homework MLU and TTR analysis of the language sample handed out in class (moved to this date from previous week on earlier syllabus)

**EDUC 525 homework for 2/23: Practice calculating MLU and type/token ratios**

1) Use the DeFrance transcript to calculate the MLU of the child’s utterances. Use the rules for counting morphemes and calculating MLU in Shipley and McAfee pp. 199-200.

2) For the utterances you use to calculate MLU, also calculate a simple type/token ratio. To do this, number each new word the child uses and count the number of words in each utterance. The last number you write is the number of different words the child produces. Then divide the number of different words by the number of total words the child used. That number is the type/token ratio.

I will collect this exercise.

March 2  

Winter Break
March 9  *Language, dialect, and identity*
How does speaking a different variety of English affect students’ language development and learning at school? How do dialects of English differ? What do teachers need to know about dialects? In particular, what are the features of African American Vernacular English that teachers need to know about?

**Readings:**


**Bring to class:**
Project #1: analysis of a young child’s language

March 16  *Language development in middle childhood; working with lexicogrammar*
How can teachers support language development in upper primary and middle school? What is the role of vocabulary development? How do vocabulary and grammar interact? What is the value of an explicit focus on language and use of a metalanguage?

**Readings:**
Menyuk & Brisk chapters seven and eight


**Bring to class:**
Short description of your tentative plan for your final project. Indicate the question/issue you are interested in, list what you have already read on the topic, and identify 2-3 readings that you plan to study as you do the project. Describe the context where you will do the investigation, indicating whether you have already contacted the teacher to seek permission. We will meet to discuss your goals.

March 23  *No class meeting*
I will be presenting research at the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) annual conference. I will schedule individual meetings about your final projects with you this week.

**March 30**

**Written language development**

How do children learn to write? How is written language development different from spoken language development? How are notions such as *sentence* and *genre* relevant to writing development? What do teachers need to know to support written language development?

**Readings:**


**April 6**

**Language development in adolescence; working with abstraction**

What challenges students in language development in adolescence? How is “academic language” different from “everyday language”? What constructs do researchers use to study academic language development?

**Readings:**

Menyuk & Brisk chapters nine and ten


**Bring to class:**

Homework analysis of written language.

*You may send me revised plans or sections to review of your final project at any time you’d like feedback.*

You will give a brief presentation of your project to the class on *April 13th or 20th*. Focus your presentation on the data you collected, how you analyzed the data, and your results and interpretation.

**April 13**

**Review of language development across the lifespan**

What have we learned about language development over the years of schooling? What new tools have you developed for supporting language development?
Readings: Menyuk and Brisk chapter eleven; review the book as a whole.

April 20 Project reports

Bring to class: Your final project. Prepare to present it.